



Environmental Bulletin

Volume 10, Number 15
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from the Savannah River Site

Public Involvement Requested for SRS Strategic Plan

The site has initiated the process to update and revise the Savannah River Site (SRS) Strategic Plan that was issued in 1997. Our goal is to complete the strategic planning process by December and issue the revised SRS Strategic Plan in January 2000. If you are interested in commenting on the draft Plan, the first draft should be available around October 15. Comments should be completed by October 30.

The SRS is moving into the 21st century with a significant, enduring, and larger role in three key areas:

National Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Stewardship

Addresses SRS's role in the reduction in the national nuclear arsenal consistent with the Comprehensive Test Ban and Strategic Arms Reduction treaties.

Nuclear Materials Stewardship – Designed to accomplish non-proliferation goals by stabilizing, storing, and disposing of legacy weapons-grade nuclear materials.

Environmental Stewardship – Refers to the Site's environmental cleanup, waste treatment, spent nuclear fuel storage, and

natural and cultural resource management missions.

These stewardship mission areas reflect our current and future missions to meet the needs of the enduring U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile; to safely and securely store, treat and dispose of excess nuclear materials and weapons grade plutonium; to treat and dispose of legacy wastes from the Cold War; and clean up environmental contamination. As we update and revise the Plan, we will organize our goals and objectives around these stewardship areas. This approach will encourage integration across mission areas and more accurately reflect

where the Site is heading in the next century.

Additionally, the updated Plan will include a Corporate Management section in which we will articulate our goals and objectives to ensure the Site is successful in our Focus Areas of Safety and Security; Technical Capability and Performance; Community, State and Regulator Relationships; Cost Effectiveness; and Corporate Perspective.

Need more information?

For requests for the draft Plan, please contact George Mishra, DOE-SR, (803) 725-7239, or Jim Moore, WSRC, (800) 249-8155. Send requests electronically via e-mail to george.mishra@srs.gov or jim02.moore@srs.gov. Send requests by regular mail to U.S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, P.O. Box A, Aiken, S.C. 29808.

FONSI Issued for Pond B Dam Repair EA

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on September 27, 1999, for the Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1285) prepared for the proposed Pond B dam repair project at the Savannah River Site (SRS), located near Aiken, South Carolina. The EA evaluated the potential for significant impacts associated with the proposed repairs to the downstream slope and toe of the dam impounding Pond B. Pond B is one of the former reactor cooling ponds located on SRS which contains low levels of radionuclide contamination within the lakebed sediments and waters of the impoundment. The dam is an earth embankment constructed in the early 1950's. Inspections by SRS engineers and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission have found seepage conditions and erosion which threaten the stability of the dam. The purpose of the proposed action is to make repairs to increase the stability of the dam and reduce the risk of failure.

The DOE, after a review of the EA, has determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and, as a result of this determination, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. Therefore, DOE has issued the FONSI.

If you wish to request a copy of the final EA and FONSI, please contact:

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U. S. Department of Energy, Savannah River
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CAB recommendations

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) met Sept. 27-28 in Martinez, Ga. The following recommendations were provided:

No. 96 ISPR of Selected Subsurface Remediation Activities

Based on recommendations provided in an independent scientific peer review of groundwater remediation in A/M Area by Joel Massmann of the University of Washington, the Board requested additional characterization of subsurface solvents; use of three dimensional models to evaluate flow patterns near vapor extraction wells; and an evaluation of flow rates and effectiveness of solvent extraction wells, barometric pumping and pump-and-treat cleanup methods. Based on information gathered from these requests, the Board recommended that DOE and the agencies establish soil and groundwater concentration cleanup goals for the A&M Area. Similar recommendations were made for the F&H Area as well. The Board will maintain the services of Joel Massmann to assist in establishing these cleanup goals.

No. 97 Shipment of Pu-238 Wastes to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

The CAB recommended that DOE expedite the TRUPACT II SAR revision submittals to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and urge NRC to provide timely review and approval. The CAB also recommended that DOE expedite the development of an alternative treatment technology that destroys the organics in the SRS Pu-238 waste to eliminate hydrogen gas generation as a transportation issue. The Board also requested written assurance that Pu-238 wastes will eventually be safely removed from South Carolina.

No. 98 Corrective Measures Study/Feasibility (CMS/FS) Study Generic Comments

The CAB provided comments on CMS/FS documents that would streamline the remedial process and integrate cleanup requirements where possible. It also requested that DOE and the agencies clarify the use of institutional controls in evaluating exposures to the public.

No. 99 Pollution Prevention at SRS

The Board is pleased with the present direction of this program and requested that it be expanded; that low level waste and clean waste be separated and disposed appropriately; and that funds be invested in future pollution prevention projects.

No. 100 Canyon Utilization and Spent Nuclear Fuel Melt and Dilute Technology

The CAB recommends that the Secretary of Energy provide formal assurance that the SRS reprocessing capability will be retained in an operational status suitable to process aluminum-based spent fuel until the melt and dilute technology and engineering development program is successful and NRC formally deems it acceptable for disposal in the national repository and the melt and dilute processing facility is constructed and operational.

No. 101 Accelerating Cleanup: Paths to Closure (ACPC)

The Board repeated previous recommendations that DOE provide adequate funding to SRS to support ACPC activities and that contingency plans, schedules and costs be added to address time and resource constraints.

for more information

For additional information or to request a public meeting, contact:

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INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

- DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, USC-Aiken, Aiken, SC
- Thomas Cooper Library, Government Documents Department, USC-Columbia, Columbia, SC
- Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, GA
- Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University, Savannah, GA

INTERNET ACCESS

SRS Home Page

<http://www.srs.gov>

Public Meeting set in Hilton Head on SRS Downstream Communication Plan

The Citizens Advisory Board Risk Management and Future Use Subcommittee will hold a meeting at the Hilton Head Town Hall, Hilton Head Island, S.C. on Saturday, Oct. 16, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Downstream Communication Plan, the Fish Advisory, the Fish Advisory communication strategy, the SRS Annual Environmental Report and hear public comment. The public is welcome and invited to attend.

Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

- **Construction and Operation of the Low Enriched Uranium Loading Station and Modification to the Existing Highly Enriched Uranium Blending Facilities at the Savannah River Site (DOE/EA-1322)**, The draft EA is being prepared. State notifications were sent on September 27, 1999. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected in fourth quarter, 1999.
- **Offsite Transportation of Certain Low-level and Mixed Radioactive Waste from SRS for Treatment and Disposal at Commercial Facilities (DOE/EA-1308)**, State notifications were sent in mid 1999. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected in fourth quarter, 1999.
- **Pond B Dam Repair Project (DOE/EA-1285)**, A FONSI was signed on September 27, 1999, for a proposed dam repair project for Pond B, a former reactor cooling pond.
- **Interim Measures for the Mixed Waste Management Facility Groundwater at the Burial Ground Complex at SRS (DOE/EA-1302)**, State notification letters regarding this proposed action were sent in July 1999. The Federal Register wetland notification was published on July 20, 1999. The draft EA for the project was sent to the States on August 5, 1999. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected in fourth quarter, 1999.
- **Closure of High Level Waste Tanks at SRS (DOE/EIS-0303)**, The NOI was issued December 29, 1998 (63FR71628). The public scoping meetings were held January 14, 1999, in North Augusta, SC, and January 19, 1999 in Columbia, SC. Publication of the draft EIS is projected for late 1999.

• **Surplus Plutonium Disposition (DOE/EIS-0283)**, Public comments are being addressed and the final EIS is being prepared. The expected issue date for the final EIS is October and the ROD is November. A draft Supplemental EIS for impacts on reactor sites was released in May, 1999.

• **SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel Management (DOE/EIS-0279)**, The draft EIS was issued December 17, 1998. Public meetings were held January 28, 1999, in Columbia, SC and February 4, 1999, in North Augusta, SC. Publication of the final EIS is projected for October 1999.

• **DOE Waste Management (DOE/EIS-0200)**, Multiple RODs will be issued. The HLW ROD was issued in August, 1999. DOE selected the Decentralized Alternative to store immobilized HLW in final form at the site of generation until transfer to a geologic repository. LLW and LLMW ROD's are expected in December 1999. A Supplemental Analysis for new waste amounts is being developed by DOE.

• **Salt Disposition Alternatives at SRS/SEIS (DOE/EIS-0082-S2)**, The NOI was issued February 22, 1999. The public scoping meetings were held in Columbia, SC on March 11, 1999, and in North Augusta, SC, on March 18, 1999. The public scoping period ended April 8, 1999. Publication of the draft EIS is projected for late 1999.

EA -- Environmental Assessment
EIS -- Environmental Impact Statement
FONSI -- Finding of No Significant Impact
NOI -- Notice of Intent
ROD -- Record of Decision

ROD issued for the Ford Building Waste Unit

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) have selected remedial approaches for Savannah River Site's (SRS) Ford Building Waste Unit (FBWU) operable unit. A 45-day public comment period for the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan and the associated draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit modification was held from November 18, 1998, to January 1, 1999.

The remedial decision is documented in the Record of Decision (ROD) document. This document includes a responsiveness summary that addresses public comments. DOE has worked with SCDHEC and EPA to ensure the remedial approach is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements.

DOE, the EPA, and SCDHEC have determined that remedial action is necessary for this unit. The preferred remedial action is:

(1) No further action is required at the Ford Building Waste Unit. The remedial action is intended to be permanent and effective in both the long and near terms.

There are no records of waste disposal for the FBWU. However, in the past, objects identified on the surface of the waste unit included shoe covers, step-off pads, coveralls, and rubber gloves. These are typical wastes from work performed in radiological controlled areas. In addition, two signs marked the site: one read "Clean Pans Only",

and the other is a sign typically used to designate a radiologically controlled area. These signs and materials indicated that regulated work may have been performed at this location. All surface debris was removed from the unit in an undocumented removal sometime prior to 1992. A time-critical soil removal action was implemented in early 1997 to address secondary sources of contamination. The removal action focused on removing secondary sources consisting of surface and subsurface soil.

A RCRA Facility Investigation/Remedial Investigation (RFI/RI) with a Baseline Risk Assessment (BRA) was performed to assess the potential for adverse effects associated with exposure to constituents present at the FBWU. The investigation adequately characterized the levels of potential contamination at the unit. No contaminants of concern were identified, therefore no additional action is required.

Copies of the Record of Decision are available in the administrative record. The administrative record is available in the information repositories listed on page 2.

The ROD is also available on the Internet in the SRS Home Page (<http://www.srs.gov>), under "Happening Now," (<http://www.srs.gov/general/srs-home.htm>) and on the SRS Environmental Restoration Home Page, under "Public Involvement," (<http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/erd/pub/pubinv.html>).

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Access the Environmental Notice web site:

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